

## **Coordinated Services Planning for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities and Their Families: What You Need to Know About Coordination, Act 264 and the DOE/AHS Interagency Agreement**

### **What is Coordinated Services Planning?**

Sometimes working with a school, a human services provider or both will sufficiently meet the needs of families with children with disabilities. Children with complex needs often require supports and services across environments including home, school, and community. In situations of high need, it may be helpful to coordinate the services and supports of the family's extended network of family and friends, community members and service providers. Many families with children who have disabilities are eligible for and entitled to coordination of services. A

**Coordinated Services Plan** can be developed for:

- Children or adolescents who are on an IEP for Emotional Disturbance or who meet the Act 264 definition of Severe Emotional Disturbance.
- Children or adolescents who qualify for special education and who are eligible for or are receiving services and service coordination from a regional Agency of Human Services program.

### **What is included in a Coordinated Services Plan?**

Developing a coordinated services plan involves an interagency team including family members and service providers. Each team is a unique combination of persons, specific to the youth and family. The team's purpose is to explore the child and family's strengths and needs across settings and to develop and implement an effective Coordinated Services Plan. This includes deciding on goals, identifying what is needed to meet those goals, writing and implementing the plan and coordinating changes over time. One service provider serves as the lead person to monitor the plan's implementation in a coordinated, timely, and effective manner.

### **What if the Coordinated Services Plan is not satisfactory?**

Most teams develop Coordinated Services Plans that are then implemented. If, however, a team is unable to find a way to agree upon or implement a plan, with parent or guardian permission, anyone on the team may call upon the Local Interagency Team (LIT Team) for assistance. Each of Vermont's twelve Local Interagency Teams is available to child and family teams when needed to address complex issues or help resolve problems.

The Local Interagency Team may review a plan and make recommendations on the content; suggest possible additional resources to implement the plan; and/or recommend that a local agency waive or bend a policy that stands in the way of a key service or support in a particular circumstance .

Local Interagency Team members include representatives of families, education, mental health, and regional Agency of Human Services programs. Each Local Interagency Team has a Coordinator identified on the attached list. The Coordinator can connect a family member with the Local Interagency Team's Family Representative. This person can help the family prepare for a meeting with the Local Interagency Team, provide support during the meeting, and follow up with the parent after the meeting regarding questions, concerns and satisfaction.

## What if the Local Interagency Team is unable to resolve the situation?

On occasion, a Local Interagency Team may not be able to fully resolve the situation. Referral to the State Interagency Team may be needed. This Team acts much as the Local Interagency Team does to review a plan; make recommendations on content, strategies, or sources of support. The State Interagency Team can also commit funds to allow for creative solutions. Neither the Local Interagency Team nor the State Interagency Team can order any agency to provide particular services, however. And while the System of Care continues to work to improve the services available, remember that budgets and regulation limit what can be done.

### Definitions

The information below describes important legislation and a state level agreement between the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education that provide further detail about legal mandates and entitlements.

- **IDEIA:** Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act, or IDEIA, Vermont is required to identify and evaluate students who have disabilities and to offer them individualized education programs (IEP) for special education and related services. Parents have specific rights concerning their participation in the special education process. For more information, visit the Vermont Department of Education Web site at [http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_sped/parents.html](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_sped/parents.html). Questions about a specific child who is receiving special education services can also be directed to the school district's special education administrator and the statewide Special Education Assistance Line. On this line, a caller may leave a voice mail message for a return call from a special education consultant; calls are usually returned within one business day. Reach the TA line at **(802) 828-5114**.
- **Interagency Agreement between the Department of Education (DOE) and the Agency of Human Services (AHS)** (June 2005) ([http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm\\_interagency.html#agreement](http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_interagency.html#agreement))  
This agreement clarifies how these state agencies will work together to ensure that all necessary services for an eligible child to receive a free appropriate public education are provided and who may be eligible for a coordinated services planning process.

### Regional Local Interagency Team (LIT) Coordinators

Barre: Lynnn Jones, 476-1480  
Bennington: Lorna Maki, 442-5491  
Brattleboro: Lori Schreiner, 254-7500  
Burlington: Robin Yandell, 863-1326  
Hartford: Ellen Hosford, 728-4466  
Middlebury: Cheryl Huntley, 388-6751

Morrisville: Jim MacDonald, 888-4314  
Newport: Carol Boucher, 334-6744  
Rutland: Jeff McKee, 723-4225  
Springfield: Will Shakespear, 463-3294  
St. Albans: Todd Bauman, 524-6555  
St. Johnsbury: Carol Boucher, 334-6744